# A Catalogue of the Birds in the Collection of the Bombay Natural History Society—14

Meropidæ and Coraciidæ

BY

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[Continued from Vol. 69 (3): 546]

This part deals with 302 specimens of 20 species and subspecies upto No. 762 in IND. HANDBOOK (4: 123) and No. 23692 of the Society's register. Mr. S. A. Hussain, Research Assistant, assisted with measurements.

744 Merops leschenaulti leschenaulti Vieillot (Java, errore Ceylon) Chestnutheaded Bee-eater 4: 240

21:10 33 (3 juv.) 8 99 3 o?

1 Sawantwadi; 1 Kadra, Kanara; 2 Coonoor Ghats, Nilgiris; 2 Manalur, Palni Hills; 1 Rajaputtee, Saran, Bihar; 1 Kurseong Division; 2 Goalpara, 1 Shillong, 2 Rema T.E., Sylhet, 1 N. Cachar, Assam; 2 Singhaling, Hkanati, 1 Manswa, W. Bank, Chindwin; 1 Mogok, Ruby Mines; \*1 Thayetmyo; 1 Sandoway Dt.; 1 Ngewpharo, Prome Dt. \*missing.

The males and females, and northern and southern birds show no differences in size.

Wing Bill Tail
16 ♂♀ 104-110 av. 106·5 26-33 av. 31·5 76-85 av. 81·3
(IH 104-111 from skull 35-40 76-84)

The tail is slightly forked with the central pair of feathers projecting into the gap, but not as long as the outermost. Of the three juvenile males, with incomplete breastbands, one with a short bill has green on the forehead while another older bird has green at the rear end of the chestnut cape.

As this bird does not appear to have been recorded from Bihar, I may mention that Mr. D. E. Reuben saw a Chestnutheaded Bee-eater in his compound at Patna, Bihar, on 7 March 1953 (pers. comm.).

745 Merops leschenaulti andamanensis (Marien) (Port Blair, South Andaman Island) Andaman Chestnutheaded Bee-eater

7:533 299

<sup>3</sup> Wrightmyo, 2 Bambooflats, 1 Port Blair, 1 South Andaman.

#### 746 Merops apiaster Linnaeus ('Europa australi; oriente') European Bee-eater 4: 233

27:8 33 11 99 (2 juv.) 8 o? (3 juv.)

1 Amara, 1 Shushan Mounds, 1 Zinjan, Karim Tabriz, (?) Mesopotamia; 1 Fad,
1 Mishim, 1 Persian Gulf; 5 Shiraz, 1 Kain, Persia; 1 Randha Tanhat, Yemen,
1 Muscat, Arabia; 4 Mastung, Baluchistan; 1 Quetta, 1 Peshawar, 4 Chitral;
2 Srinagar, 1 Kashmir.

	Wing	Bill	Tarsus	Tail
33	145-157 av. 151.5	34-37 av. 36	12-14	108-118
	(ін 144-156	from skull 37-44	12-14	108-120)
99	144-146, one 157 (?)	32-36 av. 35	11-12	100-112
	(1н 138-148			—)

14 in summer plumage between 14 February and 13 June.

8 in winter plumage between 30 May and 30 September.

5 juveniles 4 May to 14 October.

### 747 Merops superciliosus persicus Pallas (Shores of the Caspian Sea) Bluecheeked Bee-eater 4: 239

40: 14 33 (4 juv.) 8 99 (2 juv.) 18 o? (7 juv.)

3 Muscat, 2 Siyahad (? Philby), Arabia; 1 Amara, 2 Shaiba, 2 Nahr Umar, Basrah; 1 Mesopotamia; 1 Fao, 3 Bahm-i-Shur, 1 Boghan on Nihing, Persian Baluchistan; 2 Harbud, about 55 m east of Panjgur, 2 Teghab, 107 m south of Kalat, 1 Shinzai, Patti, Baluchistan; 2 Hyderabad, Sind; 1 Bharatpur; 1 Hamavas Lake, Pali Dist., Jodhpur; 1 Bhuj, Kutch; 2 Bhavnagar, 1 Ajwa, Baroda; 1 Ghoti, 1 Dindori, Nasik; 7 Thana Dist.; 2 Kihim, Kolaba Dist.

This race is currently accepted as breeding from Palestine eastwards through Iraq to Baluchistan and north-western India, having been found nesting as far south as Bhavnagar in Gujarat arriving there in May. The young of the year (juveniles) are duller in colour and show more blue and less green on the underparts and on the rump. The central tail-feathers though projecting a few millimetres beyond the others are not attenuated as in the adults. Nine of the 18 birds obtained in India are in this plumage.

Among the adults there are differences in the intensity of colour but extra-limital specimens appear more green than those from India. Accepting one complete moult between November and January (Marien, *JBNHS* 49: 158) the 12 birds in fresh (green) plumage are 4 in March, 5 April, 2 May, and 1 June *contra* 11 in worn (bluish) plumage 1 in April, 1 July, 4 August, 2 September, 1 each October, November, and December. Except for shorter tails, 90-140 av. 108 *contra* 130-150 av. 129, there is no difference in measurements. The small proportion of sexed birds does not suggest any difference in size between males and females, and all are measured together.

Wing	Bill	Tarsus	Tail
Ad. 39 130 (next 141)-157 av. 1	149 36-44 av. 38	11-12	90-150
(146-160	35-44	11-12	135-148)
Imm. ∂♀ 135-145 av. 140	35-41 av. 38	11-12	86-101 av. 94

Sp. No. 11160 ♂ Kalat, Baluchistan has the second outermost tail-feather blunt and not attenuated but projecting 15 mm beyond the others.

### 748 Merops philippinus philippinus Linnaeus (Philippine Islands) Bluetailed Bee-eater 4: 237

30:16 33 11 99 30?

Simla Hills, 2 Jagadhri, Ambala; 1 Mandi, Dhar State, C.I.; 1 Thana Creek;
 Bombay, 1 Ratnagiri; 2 Karwar; 1 Karupadana, Travancore State,
 1 Cumbum Valley, 2 Krishna Dt., 1 Vizagapatnam, A.P.; 1 Cuttack, Orissa;
 3 Baghowni, Tirhut; 1 Kahanpur, Cawnpore, 2 Kumaon, Naini Tal;
 1 Dibrugarh, 2 Assam; 1 Maymyo, 1 Bambooflats, 1 South Andamans;
 1 Camorta, 2 Trinkut, Central Nicobars; 1 Henzada, Burma.

	Wing	Bill	Tarsus	Tail
<i>33</i>	121-136 av. 131	38-41 av. 38·5	10-12	120-146 av. 134
	(ін 133-139	from skull 45-48	11-13	130-141)
우우	127-133 av. 130	35-40 av. 37	10-12	115-141 av. 127
	(ін 126-131	from skull 43-46		115-136)

The juveniles, with no pinfeathers in the tail but otherwise almost fully grown, have paler rufous throats and the underparts more bluish than green. No. 11145 \( \rightarrow \) Baghowni, Tirhut is younger (bill 28 mm, wings and tail in moult) but approaches the adults in colour.

# 749 Merops orientalis beludschicus Neumann (Sarbaz, Persian Baluchistan) Sind Small Green Bee-eater 4: 236

6:433 19 10? (juv.)

1 Mand, Iraq; 2 Mishun, 2 Charbar, 1 Baba Kallu, Persian Gulf.

The four adult males with pins in the tail have pale blue underparts which, together with the general paleness all over, immediately separate them from all specimens from India and Pakistan, which show a fair amount of variation among themselves.

The single female (wing 95, bill 25), which lacks the tail pins and the black pectoral band, is varying shades of pale blue and white (reminiscent of a Verditer Flycatcher) with no green and very different from females of the nominate form. The juvenile is, to use Ticehurst's words, a washed-out edition of the adult.

The type locality Sarbac = Sarbaz (Vaurie) is only a hundred miles from Chah Bahar (Charbar) in Persian Baluchistan along the coast of Gulf of Oman, west of Indian (Pakistan) limits. Two birds from Gajar 2200' and Korak 1900', which are noted as 165 and 185 m respectively S.S.W. of Kalat, Baluchistan, are quite different, and though slightly paler can be included among the variations in the Indian birds. They are marked beludschicus by Ticehurst (?).

Ticehurst (1923, Birds of Sind, *Ibis* p. 29) refers to comparison of Sind birds, which he calls *beludschicus*, with topotypes (the type locality is not mentioned) and states 'they are paler blue on the throat, paler

below and less bronzy on the nape than Southern Indian birds. This race extends to the lower Punjab and Jodhpur at all events.'

This was before publication of Vol. 4 of Stuart Baker's FAUNA (1927) and it is not known what specimens or literature were available to Tice-hurst.

Specimens from Rawalpindi, Jullundur, Ambala, Bahawalpur, and Jodhpur can be unhesitatingly left with nominate *orientalis* as has been done below.

Having regard to the reports of later authors, e.g. Marien (JBNHS 49: 162) and the material available, I cannot help feeling that a mistake has been made in accepting all birds from Baluchistan as beludschicus and then having difficulty in establishing that they are different from those from India. Though beludschicus may (?) extend towards Karachi along the coast, it does not occur all over Baluchistan and Sind and our westernmost birds, though perhaps slightly paler than those from peninsular India, are really much closer to the nominate race.

### 750 Merops orientalis orientalis Latham (India=Pondicherry) Indian Small Green Bee-eater 4: 234

50:26 33 18 PP 60?

1 Gajar, 165 m. SSW. of Kalat, 1 Korak 180 m. S. of Kalat, Baluchistan; 1 Rawalpindi, 1 Nawashahr, Jullundur, 3 Ambala, Punjab; 1 Bahawalpur; 3 Delhi; 1 Bhinmal, Jodhpur; 3 Kutch, 1 Dalkhania, Amreli Dt., 1 Cambay City, 1 Gir Forest, 1 Bodeli, Baroda, Gujarat; 1 Kolkaz, Melghat, Berar; 1 Kolshet, Thana, 1 Kandivli, Salsette, 1 Bombay; 2 Walwan, Poona; 2 Satara; 2 Ratnagiri; 1 Nilambur, S. Malabar, 1 Gudalur, Nilgiris; 1 Kuttani, 1 Jamestown, Kanyakumari; 1 Kalai, Trichnopoly, 1 Chitteri Range, 1 Seshachalam Hills, 1 Cudappah, 1 Cumbum Valley, Kurnool Dt., A.P.; 2 Antagarh, Bastar; 1 Dholpur, Band, Orissa; 1 Baghowni, 1 Tirhut, Bihar; 1 Sarun, 1 Calcutta Market, Bengal; 1 Meerut, 1 Bulandshahr, U.P.; 2 Bankulwa Morang, Nepal, 1 Goalpara, Assam.

There is some variation in the amount of blue on the chin, the intensity of green both above and below, and the extent of the golden sheen on the head. These differences however cannot be segregated and must be accepted as variations within the same race. One ♀ No. 21448 [(wing 91; bill 25; tail 116) Ratnagiri, coastal Maharashtra] collected on 7 January shows an inordinate amount of blue both above and below, but does not resemble beludschicus.

	Wing	Bill	Tarsus	Tail
<b>33</b>	89-97 av. 91.5	23-28 av. 25·8	8-10	105-140 av. 121
우우	89-98 av. 92·5	22-27 av. 25	8-10	92-127 av. 109

751 Merops orientalis birmanus Neumann (Myingyan, Irawaddy River, Burma) Burmese Small Bee-eater 4: 236

3:13 299

<sup>1</sup> Maymyo, 1 Sinde, Prome, 1 Kyagyun, Henzada, Burma.

Wing Bill Tarsus Tail 89, 95, 98 25, 25, 27 9-10 103, —, 120

The golden cap on the head is larger, extending on to the nape. The two females show very little of the black gorget across the front.

#### 752 Merops orientalis ceylonicus Whistler (Kalawewa, Ceylon) Ceylon Small Green Bee-eater

1 & Hambentota, Ceylon

Wing 89 (IH 92-95); bill 26; tarsus 9 (IH 9-10); tail 80 without pins.

This is a poor specimen, but the chin and underparts show blue, the bill is heavy, and the golden sheen on the head extends on to the nape.

## EL Merops orientalis cyanophrys Cabanis & Heine (Al Qunfidha, Asir, Arabia)

1 & Muscat, Muttrah

Wing 92; bill 25; tarsus 9; tail 91.

This bird received from the Peabody Museum is marked M.o. muskatensis which is synonymized with cyanophrys by Vaurie, 1959, Am. Mus. Novit., 1971, p. 8.)

### 753 Nyctyornis athertoni athertoni (Jardine & Selby) (Bangalore) Bluebearded Bee-eater 4:242

21:12 33 6 99 3 0?

2 Bhopalpatnam, Bastar; 1 Pithabhata, 1 Gurguria, Simlipal Hills, Mayurbhanj, 1 Mahendragiri, Orissa; 3 Dehra Dun, 3 Kumaon, 1 Terai, U.P.; 1 Longview T.E., Darjeeling; 2 Kurseong Div.; 2 Goalpara, 2 Margherita, Assam; 1 North Shan States, 1 Prome Dt., Burma.

The original description refers to the forehead and crown being verditer-blue, and the beard 'a fine caerulean or verditer-blue varying in intensity and lustre as exposed in different positions to the light.' The accompanying plate shows a greater amount of blue on the forehead than is visible in any specimen, and the 'beard' lacks the dark blue feathers invariably present. The 'beard' is also followed by a patch of chestnut absent in the specimens.

In the absence of any material from the type locality or southern India, a of collected by Sálim Ali at Hunsur, Mysore State, on 9 December 1939, was borrowed from American Museum of Natural History. Together with the five from Bastar and Orissa, they can in series be easily separated from the others from the north and east, by the clear grass green ('sap green' in original description) upperparts which are darker in the others. Some of the eastern birds are lighter above but all have their cheeks a slightly darker green than in peninsular birds. Eastern birds are also 'more richly coloured and more heavily striped on the nderparts' (a la Koelz for bartletti).

5 (2 ♂♂ 1♀ 2 o?) from Terai (1), Kumaon (2), and Dehra Dun (1) and Goalpara (1) have their green upperparts washed with blue, a character missing in southern birds, though Jardine & Selby refer to the type of unspecified origin having a few of the feathers (of the upperparts) being tipped with verditer-blue. The evidence available suggests that northern and eastern birds differ from those from the south, but an examination of a larger series is necessary to permit a decision. Hodgson (1836, J. A. S B. v, p. 361) has already described Bucia nipalensis from Nepal (obviously without knowledge of athertoni) while Koelz's bartletti (1954, Contrib. Inst. Regional Exploration, No. 1: 25) from Keitum, Lushai Hills, may be available for the eastern birds.

Two specimens (♂ and ♀) Tama, Central Bhutan, collected by Sálim Ali in March 1967, but which have not yet been registered, are an outstandingly deeper green above and the blue on the forehead is more prominent than in the others.

Wing	Bill	Tail
outh of Brahmaputra		
133-141 av. 138·5	38-45 av. 43·6	130-139 av. 134·5
from northern India		
134, 135(3)	37, 40, 41, 42	131, 132(2), 133
132(2), 135, 136	39(3), 41	125, 127, 130, 134
132, 136, 137	39, 40, 42	130(2), 131
rissa & Bastar		
136(2), 137	44(2), 45	128, 130, 132
132, 138 •	40(2)	127, 130
re 144	43	134
	outh of Brahmaputra 133-141 av. 138·5 From northern India 134, 135(3) 132(2), 135, 136 132, 136, 137 brissa & Bastar 136(2), 137 132, 138	routh of Brahmaputra  133-141 av. 138·5  38-45 av. 43·6  from northern India  134, 135(3)  132(2), 135, 136  132, 136, 137  20rissa & Bastar  136(2), 137  132, 138  44(2), 45  40(2)

IND. HANDBOOK (4: 112) refers to this species occurring in the Western Ghats complex from Khandesh southwards through Surat Dangs (?). Maharashtra, and southwards. Osmaston (JBNHS 38: 805) saw it at Pachmari, Hoshangabad, C.P., while Sálim Ali heard it near Songadh, Navsari Dist., Gujarat (JBNHS 52: 446). I have been unable to trace any records from anywhere else in Maharashtra, north of Karwar. Sp. No. 18819 collected by A.E. Jones at Dehra Dun on 8th February 1940 bears the following: 'Pair seen at Rajpur (Dehra Dun). Displaying before another like a roller (Coracias). Notes also reminiscent of roller.

#### 754 Coracias garrulus semenowi Loudon & Tschudi (Transcaspia) Kashmir Roller 4: 222

19:733 (3 juv.) 7 PP (1 juv.) 5 o?

<sup>1</sup> Red Sea; 1 Baghdad, 1 Hindiyeh Barrage, 1 Shustar Mounds, 1 Mesopotamia; 2 Mishum, Persian Gulf; 1 Mastung, Baluchistan; 1 Razmak, N. Waziristan, 1 Quetta, 2 Chitral; 1 nr. Kapurwara, 54 m. from Srinagar, 1 Lolab Valley,

<sup>1</sup> Kashmir; 1 Chadva, Bhuj; 1 Ajwa, Baroda; 2 Malad, Bombay.

No. 11016, Red Sea, an old skin dated May 1893, wing 193, tail 127, with underparts showing a tinge of greenish, may be of the nominate race. Among the others, unsexed No. 11013 Mesopotamia 23rd

April, 1917, is the specimen identified by Ticehurst in 'The Birds of Mesopotamia' (JBNHS 28: 303) as Coracias g. garrulus. It differs from most of the others in having the throat and upper breast a deeper blue, a character shared with three others, a of from Razmak, N. Waziristan, and two females from Kashmir.

It is curious that the 4 specimens from peninsular India are all young birds, 3 juveniles recognized by their paler upperparts and short outer tail-feathers and the fourth with a fully-grown tail but a brown washon the breast. The sexes show no differences in size and the 15 adults are measured together:

	Wing	Bill	Tarsus	Tail
3₽	189-213 av. 197	30-36 av. 33	20-26 av. 22	116-127 av. 124
	(180-210	30-35	25-26	122-135)

755 Coracias benghalensis benghalensis (Linnaeus) (Tulin, Purulia, West Bengal) Northern Roller 4: 224

31:17 đđ (1 juv.) 11 99 3 o?

Northern birds are slightly larger than those from the south, but in the specimens available the extra-limital and western birds have their upperparts paler than those from the east and also the south. Though part of the paleness may be due to wear, no dark specimen comes from west of the Punjab and Kutch. The few paler birds from further south (Satara and Santa Cruz, Bombay) may well be winter visitors.

A better series is necessary to take any definite decision, but I am for the moment listing the paler birds separately though under nominate benghalensis.

#### (a) benghalensis (darker)

14:10 33 19 30?

1 Bhagat State; 2 Ambala, Punjab; 1 Sanchi, Bhopal State; 1 Bhanupratappur, Kanker, C.P.; 2 Barkot, Bamra, Orissa; 1 Baghownie, 1 Tirhut, 2 Hazaria, Patherghata, Bihar; 1 Nawalpur, 1 Bankulwa Morang, Nepal; 1 Rema T.E., S. Sylhet.

No 18995 from Bhanupratappur, Kanker, C.P., has deep blue behind the eye, which extends backwards forming a very distinctive and different border to the blue of the head.

#### (b) subsp.? extra-limital and western (paler)

17:7 ♂♂ (1\* juv.) 10 ♀♀

1 Nahr Umar, R. Tigris, Mesopotamia; 1 Chahrbar, Persian Gulf; 2 Gajar (Mastkai) 165 m. SSW. of Kalat, Baluchistan; 1 Jajjah, Abbasian, Bahawalpur, Punjab; 6\* Kutch, 1 Gir Forest, 1 Patan, Mehsana Dt., 1 Bodeli, Baroda, 1 Golana, Cambay, Gujarat; 1 Santa Cruz, Bombay, 1 Mehda, Satara,

The juvenile from Kutch lacks all traces of blue on the upper breast

and, though paler both above and below, resembles in this respect, two juveniles of *indica* (Cumbum Valley).

	Wing	Bill	Tarsus	Tail
(a) 14 강우	175-196 av. 187	30-34 av. 32·2	21-25 av. 23.5	122-132 av. 127
(b) 17 ♂♀	176-192 av. 183	29-34 av. 31.5	21-25 av. 23·5	120-134 av. 125·7
	(ін 178-201	from skull 39-49	25-29	117-140)

### 756 Coracias benghalensis indica (Linnaeus) (Ceylon) Southern Roller 4: 226

11:6 33 3 99 (2 juv.\*) 2 o?

1 Bombay, 2 Walwan, 1 Poona, Maharashtra; 1 Karwar, 1 Cassimode, 1 Jamestown, Kanyakumari; 1 Chitteri Range, Salem; 2\* Cumbum Valley, Kurnool; 1 Induni (?)

The 42 specimens available from over a wide area covering the accepted range of the two subspecies nominate benghalensis and indica cannot be separated on the basis of the colour characters generally accepted, namely: (1) intensity of colour of nuchal collar, and (2) darker, more greenish upperparts of indica. Southern birds are slightly smaller, but those from Nepal and Bihar do not differ in colour from the southernmost specimens.

#### 757 Coracias benghalensis affinis Horsfield (Assam) Burmese Roller 4: 226

12:433 599 30?

1 Bankulwa, Morang, Nepal; 1 Kurseong Div., Bengal; 2 Dibrugarh, 1 Roop chena, 2 N. Cachar, 1 Golaghat, Assam; 1 Kamaing, 1 Maymyo, 2 Prome, Burma

These birds are darker than benghalensis, both above and below, the underwing coverts being deep blue, matching the colour of the wing quills. All except No. 11062, a female from Golaghat, Assam, show a few pale blue feathers on the underwing. In No. 11034, Bankulwa, Morang, Nepal, collected by N. A. Baptista on 16th March 1921, agrees with affinis except for a few additional pale blue feathers under the wing and the fact that the feathers on the throat show pale shaft streaks as in benghalensis. Another No. 11033 collected at the same place on 5th March 1921 agrees entirely with benghalensis with which it is listed suggesting that the area of intergradation is much further east than 85°E. suggested in IND. HANDBOOK (4: 119).

One unregistered female from Mangdechu, C. Bhutan, has the streaks on the chin brighter than in the others.

758 Eurystomus orientalis cyanicollis Vieillot (Chandernagor, Bengal) Himalayan Broadbilled Roller 4: 228

10:5 33 (1 juv.) 2 우우 3 o?

1 Almora, 2 Kumaon, Naini Tal, U.P.; 1 Balasun, Darjeeling; 1 Golaghat, 2 Margherita, 1 Bagho Bahar, Cachar, 2 Rema T.E., Sylhet, Assam

5 specimens, including the juvenile, do not have the clear pale blue patch on the primaries which appears to be an adult character.

Wing Bill Tarsus Tail

178-206 av. 194 25-32 av. 27·5 17-19 av. 18 95-109 av. 101·5

(IH 178-198 from skull 27-35 20(1) 90-102)

The juvenile is duskier all over, and has a black upper mandible.

759 Eurystomus orientalis laetior Sharpe (Forests of Malabar, the Nilgiris and Ceylon, restricted to Eridge, Travancore) Kerala Broadbilled Roller

4: 228

3 33

2 Thattakad, North Travancore, 1 Tenmalai, Central Travancore

Wing	Bill	Tarsus	Tail
191, 199, 200	27, 28(2)	15(2), 16	101, 105, 108
(гн 194-205	from skull 33-36	19-20	99-106)

760 Eurystomus orientalis irisi Deraniyagala (Maha-oya, Ceylon) Ceylon Broadbilled Roller

nil.

762 Eurystomus orientalis gigas Stresemann (Rutland Island, Andaman Islands) Andaman Broadbilled Roller 4: 231

8:633 299

3 Chirria Tapoo, 2 Wrightmyo, 1 Port Blair, South Andamans; 2 South/Middle Andamans

	Wing	Bill	Tarsus	Tail
3₽	190-202 av. 195·8	29-33 av. 31	18-19	102-112 av. 107
	(184-205	27-30	c. 21	106-112)

762a Eurystomus orientalis subsp.

1 ♀ Narcondam Island

(See Ripley's comments *JBNHS* **68**: 406) Wing 193; bill 30; tarsus 18; tail 91.

(to be continued)